

Southern Utah Wilderness Alliance v. U.S. Department of the Interior
Case No. 2:23-cv-00804-TC-DBP

Exhibit 4 to SUWA's Response to Defendant-Intervenors'
Motions to Dismiss

Suspension Decision for AEC Leases (Aug. 4, 2023)



United States Department of the Interior



BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT
Utah State Office
440 West 200 South, Suite 500
Salt Lake City, UT 84101-1434

August 4, 2023

In Reply Refer To:
3103 (UT-922)
UTU93899 et. al

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DECISION

Anschutz Exploration Corp.
555 17th Street, Suite 2400
Denver, CO 80202

: Oil and Gas Leases
: UTU93899, UTU93900, UTU93901
: UTU93902, UTU93903, UTU93904
: UTU93905, UTU93906, UTU93907
: UTU93910, UTU93911, UTU93914
: UTU93915, UTU93916, UTU93917
: UTU93918, UTU93919, UTU93920
: UTU93921, UTU93922, UTU93925
: UTU93926, UTU93927, UTU93928
: UTU93930, UTU93933, UTU93934
: UTU93968, UTU93651, UTU93656
: UTU93657, UTU93658, UTU93659
: UTU93660, UTU93661, UTU93662
: UTU93663, UTU93664, UTU93665
: UTU93666, UTU93668, UTU93669
: UTU93670, UTU93671, UTU93672
: UTU93673, UTU93675, UTU93676
: UTU93679, UTU93694, UTU93695
: UTU93696, UTU93718, UTU93725

Suspension of Operations or Production Granted

The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) Vernal Field Office received Anschutz Exploration Corp. (Anschutz) April 8, 2022, request for a Suspension of Operations and Production (SOP), and an amended request on January 13, 2023, for the above-referenced 54 oil and gas leases (Leases). Anschutz's request is based on the lawsuit filed in *WildEarth Guardians v. Bernhardt*, 1:21-cv-00175-RC (WildEarth Guardians III) protesting Federal oil and gas leases sold in five Western states during the years 2016-2020. Part of the settlement agreement of this case requires the BLM to complete supplemental analysis under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) for the challenged decisions.

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COLORADO, NEW MEXICO, UTAH, WYOMING

Anschutz Exploration Corp. (54 leases)

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The involvement of the leases in the WildEarth Guardians III litigation creates uncertainty about the future development of the leases and meets the criteria outlined for issuance of the SOP in the interest of conservation of natural resources.

Anschutz was not prevented from submitting an Application for Permit to Drill (APD), and the BLM was not prevented from processing and reviewing an APD.

Pursuant to the provisions of 43 CFR 3103.4-4(a), and for the above reason, your request for a SOP for the leases is approved effective April 1, 2022.

The individual lease suspensions will expire when one of the following conditions is first met:

1. The first day of the month following the issuance of a final decision on the supplemental NEPA analysis related to the WildEarth Guardians litigation. Upon lifting of the suspension, the BLM Utah State Office will notify you of the term remaining on the lease.
2. The first day of the month following the submission of a technically complete APD, a federal well on the subject lease in accordance with 43 CFR 3171.¹ Leases without a submitted APD will remain in suspension.
3. The authorized officer determines the suspensions would no longer be in the interest of conservation.

Under the SOP, the lease terms and rental payments for the leases are suspended effective April 1, 2022. The rentals submitted for the lease year during which the suspensions were granted will be retained in their entirety, with the balance applied to the remaining months in the lease year after the suspensions have been lifted.

Lease No.	Effective Date	SOP Granted	Time Remaining on the Primary Term
UTU93899	10/01/2019	04/01/2022	6 yrs. 7mths
UTU93900	10/01/2019	04/01/2022	6 yrs. 7mths
UTU93901	10/01/2019	04/01/2022	6 yrs. 7mths
UTU93902	10/01/2019	04/01/2022	6 yrs. 7mths
UTU93903	10/01/2019	04/01/2022	6 yrs. 7mths
UTU93904	10/01/2019	04/01/2022	6 yrs. 7mths
UTU93905	10/01/2019	04/01/2022	6 yrs. 7mths
UTU93906	10/01/2019	04/01/2022	6 yrs. 7mths
UTU93907	10/01/2019	04/01/2022	6 yrs. 7mths
UTU93910	10/01/2019	04/01/2022	6 yrs. 7mths
UTU93911	10/01/2019	04/01/2022	6 yrs. 7mths
UTU93914	10/01/2019	04/01/2022	6 yrs. 7mths
UTU93915	10/01/2019	04/01/2022	6 yrs. 7mths
UTU93916	10/01/2019	04/01/2022	6 yrs. 7mths
UTU93917	10/01/2019	04/01/2022	6 yrs. 7mths
UTU93918	10/01/2019	04/01/2022	6 yrs. 7mths

¹ On June 16, 2023, Onshore Order number 1 was codified into the code of Federal regulations as 43 CFR 3171.

Lease No.	Effective Date	SOP Granted	Time Remaining on the Primary Term
UTU93919	10/01/2019	04/01/2022	6 yrs. 7mths
UTU93920	10/01/2019	04/01/2022	6 yrs. 7mths
UTU93921	10/01/2019	04/01/2022	6 yrs. 7mths
UTU93922	10/01/2019	04/01/2022	6 yrs. 7mths
UTU93925	10/01/2019	04/01/2022	6 yrs. 7mths
UTU93926	10/01/2019	04/01/2022	6 yrs. 7mths
UTU93927	10/01/2019	04/01/2022	6 yrs. 7mths
UTU93928	10/01/2019	04/01/2022	6 yrs. 7mths
UTU93930	10/01/2019	04/01/2022	6 yrs. 7mths
UTU93933	10/01/2019	04/01/2022	6 yrs. 7mths
UTU93934	10/01/2019	04/01/2022	6 yrs. 7mths
UTU93968	10/01/2019	04/01/2022	6 yrs. 7mths
UTU93651	03/01/2019	04/01/2022	6 yrs.
UTU93656	03/01/2019	04/01/2022	6 yrs.
UTU93657	03/01/2019	04/01/2022	6 yrs.
UTU93658	03/01/2019	04/01/2022	6 yrs.
UTU93659	03/01/2019	04/01/2022	6 yrs.
UTU93660	03/01/2019	04/01/2022	6 yrs.
UTU93661	03/01/2019	04/01/2022	6 yrs.
UTU93662	03/01/2019	04/01/2022	6 yrs.
UTU93663	03/01/2019	04/01/2022	6 yrs.
UTU93664	03/01/2019	04/01/2022	6 yrs.
UTU93665	03/01/2019	04/01/2022	6 yrs.
UTU93666	03/01/2019	04/01/2022	6 yrs.
UTU93668	03/01/2019	04/01/2022	6 yrs.
UTU93669	03/01/2019	04/01/2022	6 yrs.
UTU93670	03/01/2019	04/01/2022	6 yrs.
UTU93671	03/01/2019	04/01/2022	6 yrs.
UTU93672	03/01/2019	04/01/2022	6 yrs.
UTU93673	03/01/2019	04/01/2022	6 yrs.
UTU93675	03/01/2019	04/01/2022	6 yrs.
UTU93676	03/01/2019	04/01/2022	6 yrs.
UTU93679	03/01/2019	04/01/2022	6 yrs.
UTU93694	03/01/2019	04/01/2022	6 yrs.
UTU93695	03/01/2019	04/01/2022	6 yrs.
UTU93696	03/01/2019	04/01/2022	6 yrs.
UTU93718	03/01/2019	04/01/2022	6 yrs.
UTU93725	03/01/2019	04/01/2022	6 yrs.

REVIEW AND APPEAL RIGHTS

In accordance with 43 CFR 3165.3, any adversely affected party contesting this decision may request an administrative review by the State Director. This request, including all supporting

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documentation, must be submitted in writing within 20 days of the date this decision is received, or considered to have been received by Anschutz and must be sent to: BLM, Utah State Director, 440 West, 200 South, Suite 500, Salt Lake City, Utah 84101-1345. The decision of the State Director may be appealed to the Interior Board of Land Appeals in accordance with 43 CFR 3165.4.

If you have any questions regarding this decision, contact Angela Wadman, Branch Chief of Fluid Minerals, at 801-539-4052.

Sincerely,

CHRISTINA
PRICE

Digitally signed by CHRISTINA
PRICE
Date: 2023.08.04 09:11:39 -06'00'

Christina Price
Deputy State Director
Lands and Minerals

cc: Leases.BLM@onrr.gov

Office of National Resources Revenue – David Hurd
Office of National Resources Revenue – Shannon Hahn
BLM District Manager – Green River District
BLM Field Manager – Vernal Field Office